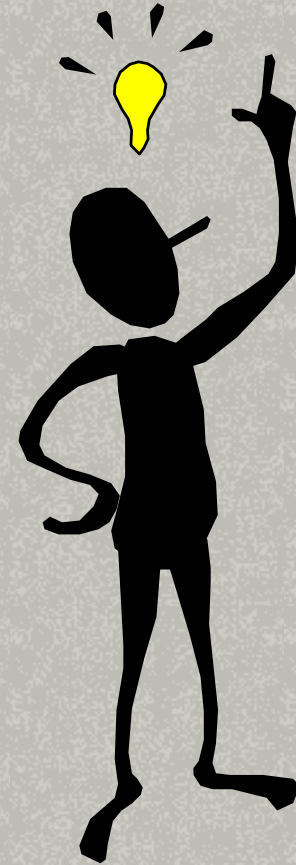




Developing a Comprehensive Program of School-Family-Community Partnerships

On planning:

- "If you fail to plan,
you plan to fail."
(Benjamin Franklin)





Warm Up Activity



- Think of a partnership in which you participate.
- What are the essential components that make it a successful partnership?
- Share your description and insights with a neighbor.



The Relationship Between Partnerships and Academic Achievement

- "The more the relationship between parents and educators approaches a comprehensive well planned partnership, the higher the student achievement."
(National PTA, 1997)



Why Schools Must Form Partnerships With Communities:

- Schools cannot shut their gates and leave the outside world on their doorstep.
- Schools are one of our last hopes for rescuing and reinventing community.
- Teachers can do with more help; and so can parents and communities.

(Hargreaves & Fullan, 1998)



Schools can no longer be indifferent to what kinds of living and working await their students when they move into the adult world.

- Market competition and parental choice are redefining how schools relate to their wider environments.

(Hargreaves & Fullan, 1998)

Characteristics of Successful School-Family-Community Partnership Programs



What we know:



Incremental Progress

- Partnerships develop over time.
- Partnership activities should be reviewed periodically and evaluated at least annually.
- Developing partnerships is a process, not an event.

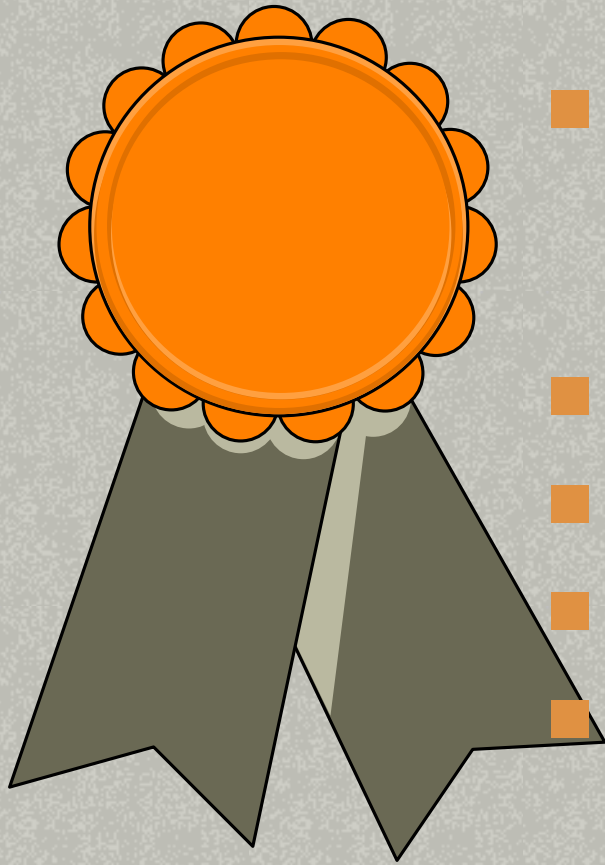


Connection to Curricular and Instructional Reform

- Focus partnerships on students' learning and development.
- Connect partnerships to curriculum and instruction.
- Locate leadership for partnerships at all levels: district, campus, and community.



Attributes of Exceptional Partnerships:



- Common vision, overarching goals, and shared beliefs and values.
- Trust.
- Adequate resources.
- Extraordinary results.
- Others?

(Williams & Chavkin, 1989)



Key Question



- How do we develop and sustain meaningful partnerships?

Here are some suggested
steps:



Step 1: Create an Action Team for Partnerships

- The action team consists of a variety of individuals with diverse skills and talents.
- Where possible, use existing team structures.
- The team consists of teachers, administrators, parents, students, and significant others.



- The team assesses current practices, organizes new options, implements activities, engages in a continuous improvement process, and maintains ongoing communication with the staff.





Step 2: Establish Firm Foundations for Actions


- Examine existing beliefs about school, family, and community partnerships.
- Look at the regulatory requirements for family involvement.
- Consider district and campus policies.



Step 3: Provide Professional Development for Team Members

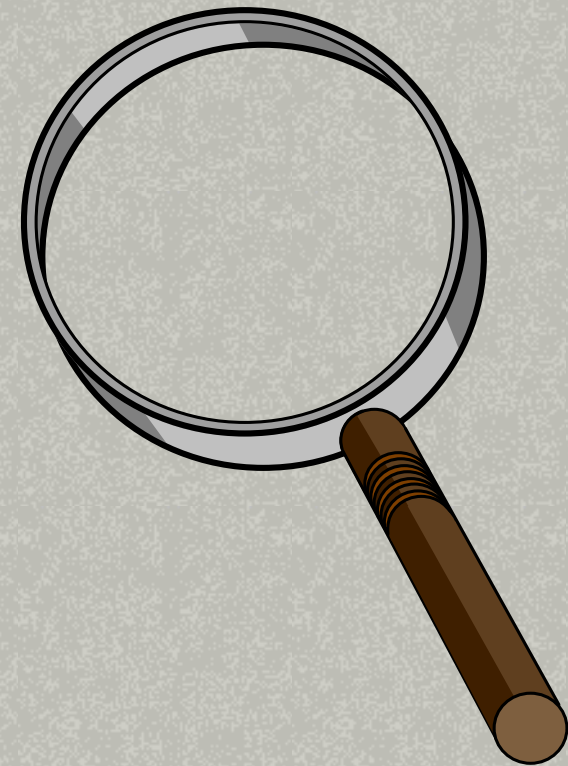
- Consider training for action team leaders.
- Consider training for teams on team dynamics to include:
 - Stages of team development.
 - Group norms.
 - Decision making.
 - Managing conflict.





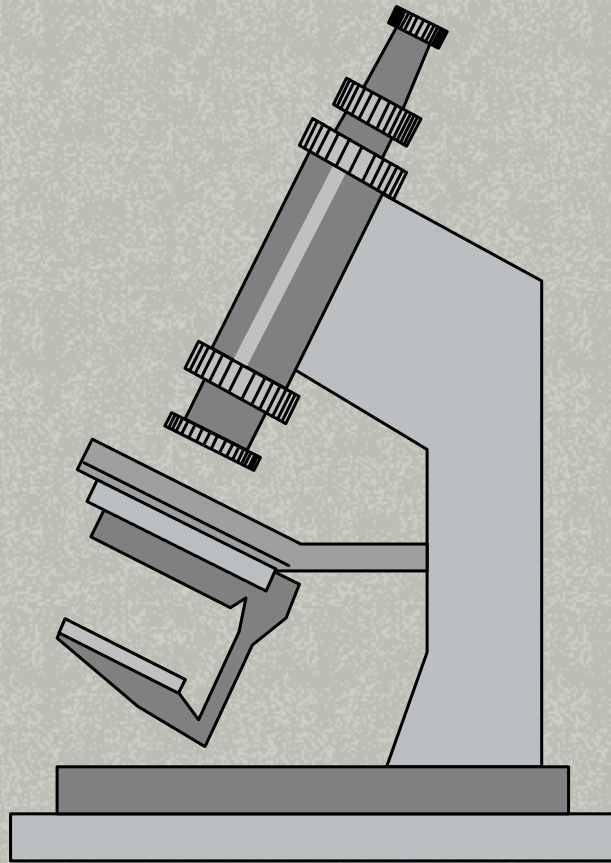
Step 4: Develop a Vision of What an Effective Program Should Include

- Look for existing models (local, state, or national).
- Examine the criteria for effective programs.
- Look for evidence of success.
- Examine the research base.





Step 5: Examine Current Practices

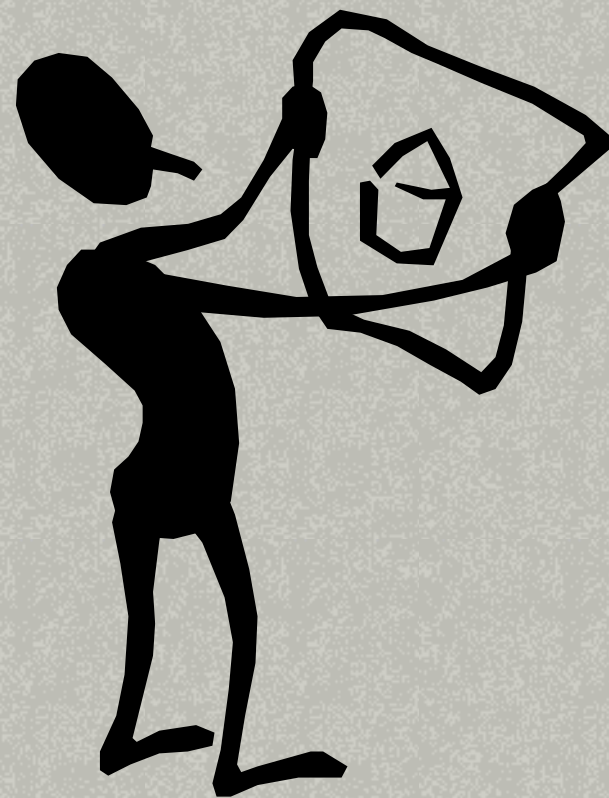


- Some options to include:
 - National PTA standards for quality programs.
(National PTA, 1997)
 - Epstein's "Starting Points."
(Epstein et al., 1997)



Step 6: Develop a Three-Year Outline

- A three-year outline shows how all family-school connections will be integrated into one coherent program.
- It is based on the ideas, goals, etc. collected from parents, teachers, students, and the community.






Step 7: Write a One-Year Action Plan

- A detailed one-year action plan should be developed for the first year's work.
- The plan should include specific activities that will be implemented, improved, or maintained for each type of involvement.
- The plan should also specify roles, responsibilities, costs, and evaluation measures.


Step 8: Obtain Funds and Other Support

- Funds may be available from federal, state, and local programs that mandate, request, or support family involvement.




- 
- Obtain support from district leaders, principals, etc. to allow time for team members to meet, plan, and conduct the program activities.






Step 9: Enlist Staff, Parents, Students, and Community to Help Conduct Actions

- Use incentives where necessary to recruit and sustain commitment to action.
- Publicize widely events and activities.
- Engage public officials in ongoing efforts.
- Keep the faith!

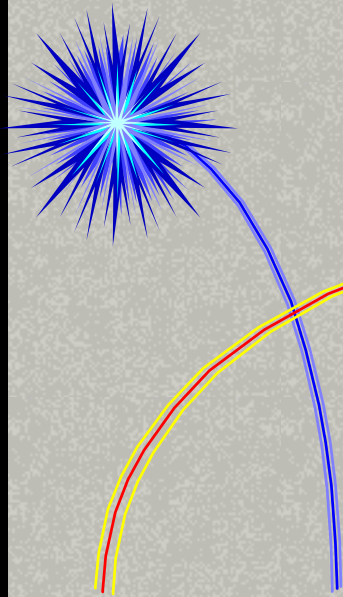


Step 10: Evaluate Implementation and Results


- Ask the following questions:
 - Which practices are strong at each grade level?
 - Which are weak?
 - Which should be changed and which should continue? Expand? Be dropped? Be added?
 - Are practices coordinated or fragmented?



Step 11: Conduct Annual Celebrations and Report Progress to All Participants



- Have a year-end celebration to recognize the progress that has been made.
- Focus on the positive!
- Give recognition and acknowledgments.



Step 12: Continue Working Toward a Comprehensive, Positive Program of Partnerships

- School-family- community partnerships grow stronger with increased levels of commitment.

And finally:

- "Our plans miscarry because they have no aim. When a man does not know what harbor he is making for, no wind is the right wind."
(Seneca)

